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SUBJECT: CONSULAR NARRATIVE FOR MOZAMBIQUE

REF: STATE 306486

The following are Embassy Maputo's responses to the questions posed in REFTEL.

A) Consular Section Chief: James H. Potts

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IVG:887

B) Do you have sufficient staff to meet consular MPP objectives?

Yes. The Consular Section currently consists of one Vice Consul, one Foreign Service National and one part-time Consular Assistant. Back-up Consular Officers at post and the Regional Consular Officer in Johannesburg provide critical advice and backstopping assistance. This is adequate staffing to meet our objectives.

C) Do you have sufficient space to meet consular MPP objectives?

Space is inadequate. We can still meet MPP objectives, but in a less-than-efficient manner. There is only one window for all NIV, ACS and cashier functions, causing delays in processing visas and providing services to American citizens. In addition, the copy machine, desks, sight lines and fire escape lanes are less than adequate because there is no other feasible way to situate them within the confines of the office space.

In 2002, Post made an OBO request for a second consular window in recent years. This year, however, we are discontinuing that request because it does not appear structurally feasible within the confines of our current building. We are not currently considering relocation of the Consular section to another office space. Post is in the process of locating sites for a new Embassy, in which the Consular section would be larger than it is at present.

D) Describe any management practices that post has instituted in the past year. Are these management practices effective? Also, please list any management practices that have been discontinued in the past year, citing reasons for their termination.

Post has continued our basic management practices. NIV interviews take place by appointment every Tuesday and Thursday morning. The Consular FSN conducts the screening process while the Consular Assistant enters data; the Vice Consul conducts interviews later in the morning. Our appointment, fee collection, and record keeping systems work well. We maintain an on-site MRV fee collection system, and are not planning an off-site move at this time. We do not use a call center, given our relatively low NIV application rate.

We carry out a full range of American Citizen Services. One small change in ACS: we are now providing additional passport pages by mail, waiving personal appearances for American citizens known to the Embassy. This system has been adopted since many Amcits in country live far from Maputo, transportation is expensive, and DHL/Fed Ex services are increasingly available and safe.

E) Please advise whether and why post might benefit from a Consular Management Assistance Team (CMAT) visit. If a CMAT visited you post, please summarize any benefits and what steps, if any, could be taken to further enhance the productivity of CMAT visits.

While staff is familiar with basic management practices, a CMAT visit would help us troubleshoot specific weaknesses, such as control of older inventory. We could also learn more about new Department initiatives, such as off-site fee collection. Such a visit would be particularly helpful in late 2004 when a new Consular Assistant will be hired to replace the one leaving June 2004.

F) Do you have the equipment you need to meet consular MPP objectives?

Basic consular supplies and equipment at post are sufficient to meet objectives.

G) How would you rate your consular section's satisfaction with automated consular systems? How do you rate the training of post personnel both within the consular section and in Management/IM on the use and support of consular systems? What types of assistance would you need from the next training and refresher teams coming from the consular systems division to assist consular system users? Please

also comment on the quality of assistance provided by the Ca Overseas Help Desk.

Consular section is very unsatisfied with the effectiveness and reliability of our automated consular systems, particularly the NIV and ACRS applications. We lose several work hours per person per week due to recurrent equipment failures. Staff is well versed in the use of consular systems, although training is always welcome. IM personnel in the Embassy do their best to assist but are not able to prevent recurring system crashes and other errors. IM personnel do not have the comprehensive training required to debug consular applications.

From November 12-24, 2003, a team from the Orkand Group will be visiting post, at which time much of our pre-existing equipment will be reinstalled, along with several new applications. Hopefully this will rectify many of our equipment problems. Biometric and photo-digitized passport equipment will also be installed. During this visit, we will require biometrics training, and we also ask that both IM and Consular staff receive system maintenance training.

H) Some posts have recently begun scanning 2-D barcodes to input DS-156 information into consular systems. Please comment on post's experience with this program.

We expect to begin scanning 2-D barcodes after the Orkand Team finishes installing equipment this November. Until now, post has no experience with the program.

I) What aspects of your ACS work are the most demanding?

The American community in Mozambique is spread throughout the country in areas where transportation to/from the capital is poor, and communication is unreliable. Amcits are often difficult to reach, and we would have a difficult time responding quickly in case of an actual emergency outside Southern Mozambique.

Thankfully, 2003 has been relatively free of consular emergencies. In late 2002, however, there were two shootings of Americans in Maputo within a three-week period - one of them fatal. Also, many more petty crimes were committed against Amcits in Northern and Central Mozambique during late 2002/early 2003. Crime levels have fallen since then, but complaints against local immigration officials and police are still very common. We spend a significant amount of staff time intervening with relevant officials in order to ensure that Americans are issued proper visas, permits, certificates, etc.

In addition, we have a growing number of pending cases of Americans hoping to adopt Mozambican children, all of them complicated for various reasons.

J) Please describe any initiatives post has undertaken to better provide assistance for victims of violent crime and their impact on your workload.

In 2003, we have not experienced any reported violent crime against American citizens that resulted in serious physical injuries or financial destitution. After two Americans were shot in Maputo in late 2002, the Ambassador hosted town hall meetings to address the concerns of the American community. We have since expanded our warden system network and communication with police in outlying areas of the country, in order to better reach potential victims in those areas. DCM, RSO and Consul met with American businesses, schools and charitable groups to review counter-terrorism awareness.

K) What aspects of your NIV work are most demanding?

Third country nationals - particularly South Asians, Cubans, and other Africans - make up a significant portion of our NIV caseload, and are generally much more difficult to evaluate than Mozambican applicants.

L) Describe the impact that post-9/11 changes in NIV processing, such as special processing requirements, SEVIS, etc. have had on your workflow, including the amount of time it takes to conduct an interview.

Perhaps 25% of our applicants require some form of special processing. None of these procedures, from SAOs to SEVIS, slow down the interview process considerably. The SAO process does hinder workflow, however, since response to SAO requests is often very slow, usually arriving after the applicant's original purpose for travel has already past. This obligates us to re-open each case upon arrival of the clearance cable, which takes time.

M) Describe the impact that changes in Personal Appearance Waiver (PAW) rules have had on your NIV operations.

The rule changes have had a limited effect. In practice, we still request personal appearances for all applicants except A-1 applicants, most A-2 applicants, and certain G applicants known to the Embassy. In particular, we have grown stricter about requiring interviews from many A-2 applicants. This is because nearly anyone vaguely associated with the Mozambican government or the United Nations can acquire a valid diplomatic note in Mozambique, but many of these applicants are not traveling on official business and should be subject to examination on 214(b) grounds.

N) For posts that have already implemented collection of two index fingerprints for visa applicants, please comment on your experience thus far with the program.

N/A. Biometric installation will take place in late November 2003.

O) What aspects of your IV work are the most demanding?

Post does not adjudicate immigrant visas but we do accept petitions, on average two or three per month. We keep in close contact with the IV team in Johannesburg in order to ensure that each case is handled effectively.

P) If applicable, please describe the impact of the DV program on your workload.

N/A

Q) What percentage of your NIV and IV applicants are third country nationals (TCNs)? From what countries are they? Do they speak a different language than post's designated language? If so, how do you communicate with them.

20% of NIV applicants in 2003 are from TNCs, up from 14% in 2002. Significantly, 27% of all B1/B2 applicants are from TNCs. The largest numbers of applicants come from India, Pakistan, South Africa, Nigeria, Brazil, and Cuba. Several other African countries are also represented, including DR Congo, Angola, Cape Verde, and Guinea. All applicants except those from Cuba and francophone Africa have a respectable command of English. The Cuban applicants generally speak Portuguese, and, in any case, the Vice Consul also speaks fluent Spanish. In a couple of cases this year, we had applicants from Congo/Guinea with insufficient Portuguese or English. In these cases, back-up Consular Officer Elizabeth Jaffee, who speaks French, conducts the interview.

R) What percentage of your NIV and IV applicants require special namecheck processing?

Approximately 6% of applicants would require special processing, almost all of whom hail from Pakistan or Cuba. However, the majority of these applicants do not meet the 214(b) threshold, so no additional processing is requested in these cases.

S) If applicable, discuss how your post has been affected, or expects to be affected, by the new passport application procedures required under the Overseas Photo-digitized passports program (OPDP), which began worldwide deployment in September 2003.

This application will be installed in late November 2003. We expect the new technology to help us reduce the timeframe from date of application to receipt of passport by up to 5 days. (Current time frame is 11-20 days.) We also anticipate that the new system will result in a slight reduction in workload for our FSN and Consular Assistant.

T) Describe the general level and kind of fraud encountered at post in ACS, NIV, IV/DV or other work and activities to combat the fraud, including use of investigation resources, tracking systems, electronic tools, liaison and information sharing. Has post conducted a validation study? If so, what was learned from the study? What is the staffing of your fraud prevention unit and who manages the unit? Are you satisfied with the level of fraud prevention training for officers and FSNs? If not, what do you believe you need to support your efforts in this area?

NIV fraud is not a grave problem at post; visa fraud in Mozambique tends to be targeted at entering South Africa rather than the United States. We have seen some recent indications of attempted NIV fraud among the Pakistani and Indian communities, however. On a related note, we see many third-country national NIV applicants who have entered Mozambique on visas that appear fraudulent. (The Mozambican consulate in Karachi has been recently charged with selling visas to Mozambique, reinforcing our suspicions.) We do not see a high incidence of fraudulent birth certificates, marriage certificates, etc. The false documents that we do see tend to be so poorly made that they do not indicate any organized fraud attempt.

Consular section investigates fraud by maintaining relations with government officials, journalists, and consular officials from other embassies. Also, the Consular Assistant conducts a validation study in which he makes phone calls each month to approved NIV applicants who we deem medium-low risk 214(b) cases, upon their scheduled return to Mozambique. From this system, we have been able to better identify NIV fraud patterns with regard to particular countries and organizations.

We are generally satisfied with our level of fraud prevention training. We could, however, use additional assistance with regard to investigation resources and tracking systems.

U) Describe country conditions that affect your ability to provide consular services (infrastructure, fraud, political setting, etc.).

The size of the country and the lack of adequate infrastructure (communications and roads) outside of the capital are challenges to providing emergency and non-emergency services to American citizens. The Consular Section is frequently asked to intervene with local government agencies to help Americans obtain necessary documentation (e.g., residency permits, drivers licenses). The police force is poorly paid and equipped, and complaints against corrupt police, immigration, and customs officials are particularly common among Americans in Northern and Central Mozambique.

V) Describe any other issue not raised in the preceding questions that you believe to be significant to the consular section's effectiveness in handling its responsibilities.

None.
LA LIME